

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 NIC-01 SAJ-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 IO-10 /081 W

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R 050008Z APR 75

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4445

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 3600

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CH VN US

SUBJ: PRC CONCERNS AND THE CURRENT DRV OFFENSIVE

REF: HONG KONG 1195 (EXDIS)

1. REFTEL DISCUSSED INTER ALIA PEKING'S OUTLOOK ON VIETNAM, POINTING OUT THAT THE CHINESE DO NOT RELISH A DRV VICTORY IN THE SAME WAY AS THE SOVIETS, SINCE AN EARLY HANOI VICTORY WOULD LIKELY ADVANCE A TROUBLED PERIOD IN SINO-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS TO SOVIET BENEFIT.

2. THE DRAMATIC UPSURGE OF DRV VICTORY PROSPECTS THESE PAST FEW WEEKS THUS HAS PROBABLY BEEN BOTH SURPRISING AND SOMEWHAT PERTURBING TO PEKING. THIS WOULD BE THE MORE SO IF HANOI HAS NOT INFORMED PEKING THAT THE PDRV MILITARY OFFENSIVE WAS ABOUT TO ADVANCE RAPIDLY WHEN, AS LATE AS MARCH 14, A TOP LEVEL PRC MILITARY MISSION HEADED BY YANG YUNG WAS IN NORTH VIETNAM. IN ANY CASE THE STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS OF A HONOI-DOMINATED, POWERFUL AND INTEGRATED
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INDOCHINA HAVING LONG BEEN A CAUSE FOR PEKING CONCERN, THE

RECENT RAPID DRV MILITARY SUCCESSES ARE PROBABLY CAUSING
CHINESE REASSESSMENT OF REGIONAL POLICY OPTIONS.

3. SINCE THE US MILITARY WITHDRAWAL FROM VIETNAM UNDER THE
1973 PARIS ACCORDS, CHINESE MEDIA HAS TREATED VIETNAM
DEVELOPMENTS IN A CONSISTENTLY RESTRAINED MANNER. THUS FAR
WE SEE NO INDICATIONS OF A CHINESE SHIFT TOWARDS PLAYING UP
THE STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNIST MILITARY TRIUMPHS
IN VIETNAM. ON THE CONTRARY THERE ARE SIGNS OF PRC EFFORTS
TO AVOID PUBLICIZING IMPLICATIONS THAT A POWER SHIFT IN THE
REGION INVOLVING A DECLINE OF US STRENGTH MAY BE UNDERWAY.
THIS IS MOST CLEARLY SEEN IN PRC MEDIA TREATMENT OF DEVELOP-
MENTS IN THAILAND RELATING TO THIS ISSUE.

4. SINCE THE MARCH 20 BRIEF AND FACTUAL NCNA REPORT ON THE
FORMATION OF THE NEW THAI GOVERNMENT, PRC MEDIA HAS REFRAINED
FROM ANY COVERAGE OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT OR OF VARIOUS THAI
STATEMENTS REGARDING THE WITHDRAWAL OF US BASES FROM THAILAND,
THE CESSATION OF US AIRLIFT OPERATIONS FOR CAMBODIA
FROM THAI BASES, AND LOOSER FUTURE
THAI-US RELATIONS. ADDITIONALLY, IN REPLAYING A MARCH 29
PRG/SVN CONDEMNATION OF THE US AIRLIFT FOR CAMBODIA FROM
THAILAND, NCNA SPECIFICALLY DELETED A FINAL PARAGRAPH IN
WHICH THE PRC DEMANDED THAT THE RTG STOP PERMITTING SUCH
US FLIGHTS. WHEREAS A MARCH 30 NCNA ITEM REPORTED THAT
BANGKOK DEMONSTRATIONS ON FEB 7 AND 13 REPRESENTED PRO-
TESTS AGAINST "CAPITALIST PLUNDER" OF THE THAI SEABED BY
A US UNION CARBIDE SUBSIDIARY, NCNA HAS NOT CARRIED ANY
CRITICISM VOICED IN VARIOUS THAI QUARTERS ABOUT US
MILITARY FORCES IN THAILAND. THIS PRC MEDIA RESTRAINT
STRONGLY SUGGESTS A CONTINUING PRC TACIT ACCEPTANCE OF
THE US POSITION , PARTICULARLY THE US MILITARY PRESENCE,
IN THAILAND. WHETHER THE CHINESE CONTINUED TO HOLD TO THIS
COURSE REMAINS TO BE SEEN AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR
SIGNS CLOSELY.
CROSS

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